

THE EDUCATIONAL GRAMOPHONE.

"The Portuguese gentleman on the first floor is learning English." That is the explanation of the midnight gramophone which has haunted me for the past week. It does not appear obvious at first, but my landlady explained.

Fortified with a small book of parrot-like sentences in English and in Portuguese, he inserts a record marked "Lesson I." into the machine, and then turns the handle, his eyes remaining glued upon the book. Thus he not only sees the English for "It is a fine morning. Good day!" but, theoretically, he *hears* the correct pronunciation of it. Fascinating idea! Might I borrow the machine when the gentleman is not using it? Certainly. Behold me, therefore, with the implement and the book of the words in front of me. It leads off with an indescribable internal whirring and creaking as though about to develop into a march by Sousa. But no; a strong American accent is informing me that "The gardener is plucking a carrot," to which the machine is playing a protesting and tinny obligato of its own. This is puzzling, for the book informs me that "London is on the Thames." The thought of the Portuguese gentleman attempting to pronounce this as "The gardener is plucking a carrot" is too harrowing. Something is obviously wrong. I find the correct record, and start again: "Where are the French books? They are on the table. Are they *VERY* interesting? Yes, they are; but not for Lucy. Are they interesting for John? Yes, they are. John is not a little boy." After which it proceeds with a string of peculiarly American words, always with the same rich twang and wheezy accompaniment, "Elevator, store, trip, railroad," etc., and then returns to Lucy. "Are you well, Lucy? No, Madame, I am not very well. Is it a good hen? Yes, it is a very good hen. Are you rich? Yes,

we are rich. We had a beautiful trip for two months, and saw all the finest cities in Europe."

Spring is here, but for the Portuguese gentleman, "Idle is the rumour of the rose." The sun may shine, and birds may sing, and flowers blossom, but he sits in his bedroom with his gramophone—learning English.

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A dreadful thing has happened. The Portuguese gentleman, on descending to breakfast, was asked by the old maiden lady if he would take tea or coffee. He drew a deep breath, made a terrible whirring noise, and replied: "No, Sir, I do not require any waistcoats at present. Have you any cuff-links?"

E. W. H.

A PAPER CHASE IN CAMP.

I WAS awakened by a soft voice at my head saying, "Miss Sahib, Miss Sahib." I slowly yawned, and turning my head, saw my little bearer, Siri, with a tray in his hand.

It was a welcome sight, and I pointed to a small round table beside me. He put the tray down, and turning to the other bed, went through the same process.

My chaperone, Mrs. Mitchell, nearly knocked Siri down. He didn't seem to mind, having become accustomed to her curious method of waking, though usually while calling her he kept his distance.

I poured out some tea, and took it to her, ducking my head well, for all our clothes were hanging on a rope stretched longways down the tent. We chatted together while we sipped our tea and munched the crisp pieces of hot buttered toast. A glance at my travelling clock gave me a great shock.

"Good gracious, Mrs. Mitchell, it is after half-past six, and we have to start at seven!" Mrs. Mitchell eyed me sleepily. "Oh, it's all right; there's lots of time, and everybody is sure to be late!"

That was most probably true, but it was no reason why we should not be in time. Mrs. Mitchell hated punctuality, and so invariably we were late for everything.

I sprang out of bed, and picking up my clothes, went into the front tent. We had three small tents joined together. The first served as a dressing-room, the second held our beds and clothes, the third was our bathroom, where two tin baths gloried in unlimited space!

We talked busily of the subject that was engrossing all our attention on the last day of Camp—"The Ladies' Paper Chase."

"I wonder how the others are feeling," I said, while struggling with a refractory riding boot. "Mrs. Allen will be as excited as anything. She is madly keen on winning, but so is little Miss de Stair, and I must say I hope she'll get it. Of course, you and I have no chance—absolutely none. Lola is right enough on the racecourse, but she is hopeless across country." I nodded sympathetically. "Yes, and as for Chappie, he is far too fat, so he is no good. Wasn't it hard luck that Mr. Carter had fever, and could not exercise him properly. Two polo practices in Camp haven't done much good!"

"Of course not," broke in Miss Mitchell, "It was too late; but he is a rare little goer all the same, with a mouth like velvet, my husband says."

By this time both boots were on, and I glanced at Mrs. Mitchell. She was sitting up in bed with her knees hitched under her chin, peering at me through a tangle of untidy brown hair. I gently insinuated my clock on to the table beside her, and coughed suggestively; but, alas, it had no effect, for she burst out, "Oh, I do hope Miss de Stair will get it. She has every chance, for High-Flyer is as good, if not better, than Gozo; and then, of course, weight tells, and Mrs. Allen is two stone heavier if she's an ounce!"

During this outburst, luckily for me, her eye fell on the

clock. I heard a smothered gasp, and rejoiced inwardly. There was nothing to complain of now. In fact, I had to beat a hasty retreat outside, for all sorts of curious garments went flying round. In a few minutes she emerged rather hot and breathless, and we hurried to the *rendezvous*.

Two or three of the ladies were already mounted, and standing round them were half-a-dozen men all talking eagerly.

"Good morning, everybody!" I called out as we approached. "Don't you all feel awfully excited?"

One or two of the men laughed.

"You must calm yourself, Miss Armstrong, if you are going to do anything this morning," said Mr. Mitchell, "or Chappie will do a bolt. If I'm not mistaken, he'll want holding in!"

"Holding in!" I echoed dismally, "Why, I am just going to hold his head and have a real good time. If I can't win, at least I can have the raciest ride imaginable!"

More discussion on the subject was stopped by the syces bringing up our ponies. After we were mounted. Mr. Mitchell gave us various directions, as he prepared to go on ahead with another man, and lay the trail. Gaily laughing and talking, we trotted off in the direction of the starting-point, accompanied by the two men who were to ride with us the first part of the way. We all stopped as we arrived at the spot, and gathered round our umpires.

"Now ladies, do wait quite quietly!" began one, with a laughing attempt at seriousness; "the others are to have ten minutes' start exactly, and you still have eight minutes yet!"

We all groaned in chorus. There were six of us, all as excited as possible. Our ponies were trembling with joy at the run before them, and could not be induced to stand still. Mr. Middleton continued to give absurd directions, which sent us off into fits of laughter.

At last the moment arrived, and we ranged ourselves into line!

"One, two, three!" and away we went. I had no time to look at any of the others. Chappie was off in real earnest. The cold wind whistled past my ears as we flew along in our mad career. I tried to keep on the paper, but it was very difficult.

So far, we were more or less in a bunch. I gave Chappie his head, and his little body lengthened out, and we shot past Mrs. Mitchell and two others. My excitement was intense. Up we came to Gozo and High-Flyer, and past we went. For three gloriously heavenly minutes I led. But alas! I saw looming close ahead one of the "made" jumps. A fearful thought flashed into my brain. "Would Chappie refuse it!" I urged him on. Close behind I heard Mrs. Allen's voice, and alongside her was Miss de Stair. Chappie tossed his head disdainfully as he felt the hot breath of Gozo just behind him. He laid back his ears, and I could feel him strain every muscle.

Poor pony, his want of condition began to tell on him. Gozo and High-Flyer passed us, two slim streaks of brown! They were over the jump like birds, and all the others went at it with a rush.

Chappie gave a sudden whirl, which nearly unseated me; the little wretch had refused!

Once more we were off, and soon came up close to Lola. Both ponies were panting hard, and streaming with perspiration. Away ahead we could see the others fast becoming specks in the distance. We pulled up simultaneously.

"It's no good," groaned Mrs. Mitchell, "we had better give them a breather."

I turned a very flushed face to her, my topee was half off, and my hair streamed down my back in untidy manes.

"Oh, it was great," I gasped breathlessly, "simply great! Glorious! Did you see me lead?"

She laughed at my eagerness.

"Yes, rather. Chappie did splendidly. You know, for a moment I thought you were going to keep it up. Poor Chappie, if only he had been in condition, I believe you would have won!" and she smiled at me kindly.

"Do let's have a real good canter home, Mrs. Mitchell. We can stop at the winning-post to hear the news."

We slowly walked the ponies some hundred yards, till we got on to the racecourse, and then started off at a good smart canter which soon brought us to the others. A great crowd had collected round Mrs. Allen and Miss de Stair, and we pressed forward anxiously to hear the result. Miss de Stair had come in first. We congratulated her heartily, and Mrs. Allen too, for it had been a close thing.

Mr. Mitchell called out the arduous six to go and change, and everybody turned and went in the direction of the tents. We two scuttled off, hastily prepared to slate poor little Seri if our baths were not ready. But everything was in order, even to a clean skirt and blouse laid out neatly on my bed.

It was quite refreshing to listen to Mrs. Mitchell's splashes as I did my hair, knowing, that in a few minutes, I too would be glorying in the joys of my tub.

Later on we found everybody (of course, as usual, we were late!) at breakfast in the volunteers' mess-room.

A regular babel of voices greeted us, and it was difficult to know which seat to select from the many kind offers. Everybody was talking at once and the noise was tremendous. There were well over 100 volunteers and perhaps fifty or sixty ladies. The white-clad servants moved silently about carrying the various dishes selected by their sahibs and mem-sahibs. Seri, calm and imperturbable as usual, stood behind my chair, having carefully placed beside me a little plate of specially-prepared toast.

It was a beautiful morning, and soon we scattered to our various amusements, having discussed to our full satisfaction the great event of the day.

K. F.